(c) whether initially the oil marketing companies could source funds required for purchase of new cylinders from large sums of security deposits by existing LPG customers and later replenish the same with fresh security deposits from new customers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have been asked not to stop the release of new LPG connections. New LPG connections are to be made available as soon as possible and in any case, within a period of sixty days. At present, new LPG connections are available for genuine domestic customers and as on 01.10.2008, there are 1030.4 lakh LPG customers in the country, covering 53% of households as per 2001 Census. OMCs have reported that they have released 20.06 lakh new LPG connections in the country during the period April-September, 2008.

The amount of security deposit to be collected from the customers is based on the procurement cost of the cylinders and is collected once the new connection is released. The amount of security deposit is revised from time to time by the OMCs to take care of the increase in the procurement cost of the cylinders.

TAPI pipeline project

419. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the reaction of Government on the media reports that India is not inclined to push through Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline project but is very keen on Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline;

(b) whether it is a fact that recently he held bilateral talks with Pakistan on TAPI pipeline; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that China is eagerly waiting to grab IPI pipeline in view of India not showing keen interest in this pipeline project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) In order to enhance the energy security for the country, Government is pursuing the import of natural gas from Iran through IPI gas pipeline project and from Turkmenistan through TAPI gas pipeline project.

(b) 2nd Technical Working Group (TWG) meeting and 10th Steering Committee Meeting (SCM) of the Project was held at Islamabad on April 21-22, 2008 and April 23-24, 2008 respectively. Subsequently, the 3rd and 4th meetings of TWG were held in Asghabat, Turkmenistan on May 29-31, 2008 and September 3-5, 2008, respectively at Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. These meetings were attended by representatives from all participating countries, including India.

(c) No official communication has been received in this regard.

Exclusive Natural Gas Grid in Andhra Pradesh

420. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state: